**Pcrmancn Membership of Security Council**

†*394. SHRl SWARAJ KAUSH/\L ;

SHRI KRISHINA KUMAR' BIRLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Govcrniment are awa re of the recent report from U.S.A., that though the; U.S. President favours India's becoming a permanent member of the Security Council, the U.N. Resolution on Kashmir is the main obstacle;

(b) if so, whether Government have sought any clarification on the reports;

(c) if so, the details thereof, and

(d) what is Government's reaction with regard thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFIARS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The Government has seen news items, referred to in the Question, based on a remark attributed to President Clinton, in a Press Release by a private foundation in the United States.

(b) and (c) The statement referred to is not an official statement. It is not the policy of Government of India to seek clarifications on non-official press reports.

(d) It is Government's view that based on every objective criteria, India has a claim to permanent memebership in any expanded UnitecI Nationas Security Council.

**Cooperative Societies in the Country**

*395. DR. Y. LAKSHMl PRASAD ; Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cooperative societies in the country;

(b) the demands made by the National Cooperative Union of India to solve their problems; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to strength cooperative mo vement by working on National Cooperative policy ?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA): (a) There are 5.04 lakh cooperathe societies of various types in India.

(b) National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) submitted a Memorandum to the former Agriculture Minister on 23-12-1999 raising issues relating to (i) framing of National Cooperati\e Policy, (ii) recognition of Cooperation as a specific sector of Indian economy, (iii) amendments in Cooperation Law, (iv) amendment in Ta.\ation Law, (v) expeditious issue of Licence to Cooperative Bank of India (GOBI), (vi) support to Cooperative Credit and Banking Sector, (\ii) need for strengthening Consumer Cooperatives, (viii) support to Labour Cooperatives, (ix) support to Industrial/Artisanal Cooperative, and (x) need for Rehabilitation of Sick Cooperative Units.

(c) The role of cooperatoves has acquired a new dimension in the changing
scenario of globalisation and liberalisation of the nation's economy. The Government, therefore, proposes to evolve a new National Cooperative Policy to facilitate all-round development of the cooperatives and their economic viability. The steps are being taken to bring it out at an early date.

**Sikh, Hindu Leaders in House of Lords**

*396. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item captioned "Sikh, Hindu leader in House of Lords" that appeared in the Indian Express dated the 17th January, 2000;

(b) whether it is fact that Sikh and Hindu leaders would be allocated seats in the House of Lords (U.K.); and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take up the mattter with the British Prime Minister to make the proposal a success ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFIARS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Members of the House of Lords are appointed on the recommendation of different party leaders and senior politicians, after approval by the Political Honours Scrutiny Committee. As at present, only representatives of the Church are allocated seats. There are nine members of Indian origin in the House of Lords. One of them, Lord (Tarsem) King, is a Sikh.